



ACHIEVING SELF-AWARENESS

"Knowing others is wisdom. Knowing yourself is Enlightenment." - Tao Tzu

Do you see what I see?

Mirror, mirror on the wall, who's the fairest *elephant* of them all?

Historically, it was thought that only humans, chimps and possibly dolphins were able to recognize themselves. However, after watching three elephants at the Bronx Zoo in New York handle themselves in front of an elephant-sized mirror, researchers discovered that the animals were actually primping and preening in front of their image, thereby displaying self-awareness traits.

Yet, self-awareness isn't only about how we look. Self-awareness is created when we think about who we are: our strengths and weaknesses, our motivations and personalities, our habits and values. This type of self-reflection doesn't come easily. Even when feedback is presented to us, we're not always receptive to it because our personal views of ourselves often override the views that other people have of us.

No one is more critical of us than the self-deprecating voice in our own heads. If anyone else talked to us the way we do ourselves, many of us would fight back, or walk away. Honest self-examination can improve our judgment and help identify opportunities for professional development and personal growth.

All self-help, personal growth and development should be intended to create greater happiness in our lives. Unfortunately, for many, self-reflection is viewed as a way to look at what we are doing wrong and this is only one part of developing self-awareness.

Have you ever stubbed your toe, smashed your thumb with a hammer or hit your funny bone? Chances are that when this occurred you were highly aware of your toe or thumb and, for that moment, focused on little else. Pain and discomfort shouldn't be the only things that capture our attention. Apply this same focus to creating self-awareness about what brings you joy, contentment and satisfaction.

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To Thine Own Self Be True

When we want good, solid information, we turn to the experts. So, who are you going to turn to for information about yourself? Who's the expert?

You! You live in your skin and mind 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year. Day in and day out. No one's closer to you than you!

Self-awareness is invaluable. You cannot buy it, nor can anyone cultivate it for you. As you increase self awareness, you better understand why you feel what you feel and behave as you behave. That gives you the opportunity and freedom to change those things you'd like to change about yourself and create the life you want. Fully knowing who you are will allow self acceptance and change to become possible.

Is your life simply happening without much intention on your part? To explore this, answer the Self Awareness questions below.

1. Are you getting what you want out of life?
2. When was the last time you had some fun?
3. What gives you the greatest sense of joy, inspiration and excitement?
4. What motivates you to grow personally and professionally?
5. Are you dissatisfied or simply tolerating some aspects of your life?
6. Has your profession or business become your life?
7. If you had no restraints, no fear and no guilt, what work would you love to create or do?
8. Where do you find your energy? Is it healthy?
9. As a child, what did you most often dream of doing or being when you grew up? What happened to these dreams and ideas?
10. What area of your life would you like to see change?

If you would like assistance exploring ways to achieve self-awareness, contact SYMMETRY at (414) 256-4800 or (800) 236-7905 for confidential assistance.



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